

MOTION BY SUPERVISORS DON KNABE AND SHEILA KUEHL

May 5, 2015

Los Angeles County ocean lifeguards risk their lives every day to protect the public at our County's beaches. Like other public safety officers, ocean lifeguards can demonstrate extraordinary valor in the line of duty when they come to the rescue of swimmers and other public members in distress. The County's ocean lifeguards rescue an average of over 11,000 individuals every year and take countless preventative actions to reduce injuries and prevent drowning.

Often these rescues happen under precarious water and environmental conditions, creating heightened dangerous situations. As an example, over the 2014 Fourth of July holiday weekend, in Abalone Cove Park in the City of Rancho Palos Verdes, literally dozens of distressed swimmers were rescued over several days of extraordinary surf conditions. On July 6 alone, 29 victims were rescued by lifeguards, three of whom were airlifted to area hospitals.

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RIDLEY-THOMAS	_____
KUEHL	_____
KNABE	_____
ANTONOVICH	_____

Just recently, on April 3, 2015, a County ocean lifeguard executed a three-person rescue over choppy waters on his own, including treading water for approximately 15 minutes with an unconscious victim before he could get this last victim to shore. All these persons survived thanks to County ocean lifeguards who regularly risk their own safety, and often commit acts of extraordinary valor which should be officially recognized.

Current law authorizes the Governor to annually present the Public Safety Medal of Valor, the highest State award for extraordinary valor above and beyond the call of duty given to a public safety officer. State Assembly Bill 489, by Assemblymember Gonzalez, as introduced on February 23, 2015, would add ocean lifeguards to the list of public safety officers eligible to receive the Public Safety Medal of Valor, and be recognized at the State level for their bravery and the invaluable service they provide.

WE, THEREFORE, MOVE that the Board of Supervisors instruct the Interim Chief Executive Officer and the Sacramento Advocates to support AB 489.

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